## Session 3B and 4B: Making Assessment Decisions: Combining Multiple Types of Data

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Making Assessment Decisions: Combining Multiple Types of Data, Gregg Good, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (moderator)

States and Tribes collect multiple types of data (e.g., physical, chemical, biological, toxicological) to assess attainment of Aquatic Life (ALU) and other beneficial uses, as per Clean Water Act requirements. To make an assessment decision, each data type can be reviewed and "independently applied" against applicable numeric or narrative water quality standards. If at least one data type shows non-attainment of standards, the water resource can be judged as impaired, i.e., not attaining the use. Alternatively, the multiple data types can be interpreted collectively, with more emphasis (i.e., weight) given to the types that provide the most reliable and relevant information toward the assessment. This approach is sometimes called a "weight of evidence" approach.

This session addresses the relative benefits of each of these two approaches: "Independent Applicability" and "Weight of Evidence," for assessing attainment of ALU. A "nuts and bolts" discussion of what these approaches really are, along with a historical perspective of their application, will be provided. Region 5, each of the six Region 5 states, as well as ORSANCO, will share their perspectives about using these approaches; various science, policy, and legal implications will be considered. Ample time is provided at the end of the session to openly discuss these often conflicting approaches; to clearly understand state, federal, and other perspectives; and to explore criteria that can be used to help determine when one approach might be more applicable, desirable, or defensible to use than the other.

Notes:			